

# PPM 602

## STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

### CONTENTS:

#### *GENERAL REQUIREMENTS*

602.01	Student Financial Aid Requirement (pp.1-2)
602.02	Free Application for Federal Student Aid (p.2)
602.03	Other Required Student Financial Aid Forms (pp.2-3)
602.04	Application Deadlines (pp.3-4)
602.05	Maximum Efforts (pp.4-5)
602.06	Financial Aid Communication (FAC) Form (p.5)
602.07	Maximum Vocational Rehabilitation Program Assistance Provided (p.6)
602.08	Supporting Services Costs for Training (p.6)
602.09	Use of Non-Grant Funds (p.7)
602.10	Use of Gift Aid, Grants, Scholarships, and Other Resources Undesignated as to Purpose (p.7)
602.11	Use of Vocational Rehabilitation Program Funds (p.7)
602.12	Student and Family Responsibilities (pp.7-8)
602.13	Effect of Attending an Out-Of-State Training Institution (pp.8-9)
602.14	Prohibited Uses (p.10)
602.15	Resolution of Disputes and Special Circumstances (pp.10-11)
602.16	Required Notification (p.11)

#### *RECORD OF SERVICES DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS*

602.17	Required Documentation (p.12)
602.18	Information Technology System Compliance (p.12)

### ***GENERAL REQUIREMENTS***

#### **602.01 STUDENT FINANCIAL AID REQUIREMENT**

In accordance with federal requirements, no postsecondary training in institutions of higher education can be paid for with Vocational Rehabilitation Program funds unless maximum efforts have first been made to meet the costs of such training, to the maximum extent possible in whole or in part, with grant aid secured from other sources. Individuals seeking Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance toward meeting any of the cost of attendance (COA, including tuition and fees, room and board, books

and supplies, transportation, and personal costs) for postsecondary training, as determined by the institution of higher education attended, must apply for, accept, and utilize all available federal, state, and institutional (campus-based) student grant aid for which they are eligible. If the individual fails to apply for, or refuses, any available grant assistance for which they are eligible, Vocational Rehabilitation Program funds cannot be authorized for any of the cost of attendance (COA) associated with the individual's postsecondary training efforts.

## **602.02 FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

(1) All Vocational Rehabilitation Program applicants and eligible individuals who are first-time students planning to enter postsecondary training with program financial assistance for the cost of attendance (COA) must obtain and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, and must submit it to the designated federal processing agent contracted by the U.S. Education Department to analyze the information submitted and assess the individual's eligibility for federal student financial aid. The FAFSA can be obtained from high schools, postsecondary training institutions, and some other public entities (such as libraries and post offices), or can be accessed electronically at: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

(2) Continuing students will automatically receive a renewal FAFSA form, mailed to the student at the address provided on the most recent FAFSA submitted. The renewal FAFSA contains the same questions as the previous FAFSA, but is partially completed for the student. The renewal FAFSA, or a new FAFSA, as applicable, must be completed and submitted to the designated federal processing agent.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The means by which application for all available grant aid must be made is by completing and submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form of the U.S. Education Department. Completion and submission of the FAFSA is required because it is the universal, uniform means used by grant awarding entities to assess the individual's and family's resources and determine the level of student financial aid grants for which the student is eligible.]*

## **602.03 OTHER REQUIRED STUDENT FINANCIAL AID FORMS**

In addition to the FAFSA or renewal FAFSA (which must be completed and submitted in all cases), the individual must also obtain, complete, and

submit any other student financial aid application forms required by the postsecondary training institution to be attended necessary to capture all available grants and scholarships for which the individual qualifies. Institutionally required financial aid forms must be obtained from and submitted according to the instructions provided by the institution to be attended.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. While the FAFSA is the one common means uniformly used to assess the individual's and family's resources and determine the level of student financial aid grants for which the student is eligible, other forms may be required—particularly with respect to the awarding of institutional aid.]*

## **602.04 APPLICATION DEADLINES**

(1) First-time students must complete and submit the FAFSA within the Indiana priority filing period (after January 1, but in time to be received by the processing agent on or before March 10) and any additional student financial aid application form(s) required by the postsecondary training institution to be attended in accordance with deadlines established by the institution, unless the date of the individual's application for vocational rehabilitation services is such that the priority filing period has passed before the individual has been informed of the obligation to apply for grant assistance. In such instances, the individual must submit the completed forms as soon as possible after the decision is made to enroll in postsecondary training.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The FAFSA and other forms must be completed and submitted by the individual and family in all cases, even if the priority filing period has passed. Individuals who file after the priority filing period may still qualify for federal student financial aid, though they will not be eligible for state student financial aid resources, and institutionally based aid may be unavailable or reduced. The necessary applications must be made nevertheless, in order to capture all financial aid resources that remain available to the individual, or to obtain an authoritative determination that the individual qualifies for no available resources. The results of the FAFSA must be available and considered prior to authorization, and all authorizations for any of the cost of attendance must be based on a current FAC. Any exceptions to these rules must have prior approval of the applicable Region Manager. Exceptions might include, but are not necessarily limited to, a delay caused by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or program error or training programs that begin only on an annual cycle at specified times.]*

(2) Continuing students must complete and submit the FAFSA or a renewal application within the priority filing period, and any other form required by the postsecondary training institution in accordance with the deadlines established by the institution, without exception. If the individual might have met the appropriate deadlines but has failed to do so, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program can assist with supporting services only (such as note taking, reading, interpreting, and attendant service needs associated with training), and can provide no assistance whatever with the cost of attendance (COA) during the ensuing academic year, until such time as the FAFSA is submitted within the Indiana priority filing period deadline and all other forms required are submitted within the respective deadlines established by the training institution attended.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Continuing students who fail to apply within the priority filing period necessary to capture all available federal, state, and institutional financial aid for which they are eligible cannot be assisted with any of the cost of attendance (which is to say, any tuition and fees, any room and board, any books and supplies, any transportation, or any personal expenses), and no exceptions to that policy are permitted.]*

## **602.05      MAXIMUM EFFORTS**

The maximum efforts to obtain available grant assistance for postsecondary training required by section 602.01 of this chapter will be deemed to have been demonstrated by the following criteria. Unless the individual has met these requirements, no vocational rehabilitation funds can be authorized to assist with any of the individual's cost of attendance (COA).

(1) The individual (and the individual's family, as applicable) must have obtained and completed the forms required to apply for all available federal, state, and institutional (campus-based) grant aid and (unless an appropriate exception can be made in accordance with section 602.04(1) of this chapter, must have submitted the completed forms at the appropriate times) as described in sections 602.02, 602.03, and 602.04 of this chapter.

(2) In addition to the required forms, the individual and family must have provided any substantiating documentation required by the appropriate financial aid office (FAO) of the institution to be attended that is necessary to process the individual's application for student financial aid.

(3) While a student, the individual must preserve his or her eligibility for continued student financial aid by continuing to meet any and all federal, state, and institutional qualifications for student financial assistance, including, but not limited to—

(A) maintaining satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the educational institution attended (failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress will render the individual ineligible for further federal, state, and institutional grant aid); and

(B) adhering to all requirements and codes of conduct (e.g., remaining drug free) required as conditions of student financial aid eligibility.

(4) The individual must owe no refunds on grants previously received and cannot be in default on repayments of previous loans, or must have made satisfactory arrangements for payment of the refund due or the repayment, deferment, or discharge of loan indebtedness. (Students who owe a refund on previous grants or are in default on a student loan and have not made satisfactory arrangements to repay the obligation or to have it deferred or discharged are ineligible for additional student financial aid grants, loans, or Federal Work Study program assistance.)

#### **602.06 FINANCIAL AID COMMUNICATION (FAC) FORM**

The Financial Aid Communication (FAC) form provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program must be utilized for the communication of student financial aid information between the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and student and the FAO. The form must be initiated for each academic year or summer session by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and student. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has no authority to amend any figure entered onto by the FAO of the institution.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. If the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has reason to dispute any figure entered onto the FAC form by the FAO, the Counselor's only recourse is to refer the question back to the FAO for review and possible amendment.]*

**602.07 MAXIMUM VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM ASSISTANCE PROVIDED**

The maximum amount of Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance that can be provided for meeting the cost of attendance for postsecondary training (i.e., the cost of tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses) is the lesser of:

(1) the actual cost of attendance, not to exceed the unmet need determined and reported by the financial aid office of the institution attended and reported on the Financial Aid Communication (FAC) form; or

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The unmet need is that portion of total cost of attendance remaining after the training institution subtracts from the total cost the amount of the grant assistance for which the individual has been determined to be eligible and the amount of expected family contribution (EFC), which is the portion of the cost of attendance for which the student and family have been determined to be responsible, based on income.]*

(2) the amount established by Vocational Rehabilitation Program policy and practice as the maximum reasonable fee for postsecondary training, as published in its fee schedules.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The reasonable fees for postsecondary training are reviewed and amended annually, prior to the beginning of each new school year, and are set at the highest cost of any state-supported Indiana institution of higher education for both colleges and universities, and vocational schools.]*

**602.08 SUPPORTING SERVICES COSTS FOR TRAINING**

Costs not included in the cost of attendance and not reflected in the unmet need figure, but necessary for the individual to access, participate in, and derive benefit from training (such as the costs for interpreting, reading, note taking, or attendant care services) may be authorized for applicants and eligible program participants, as needed and appropriate, in accordance with program policies and practices and at established program fee schedule rates.

**602.09 USE OF NON-GRANT FUNDS**

Vocational Rehabilitation Program participants and their families are not required to participate in any non-grant program, including the Federal Work Study program or any educational loan program, as a condition for receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance for postsecondary training. Individuals and families may, however, participate in such programs as a matter of informed choice, or may need to participate in such programs as a means to meet their expected family contribution (EFC) amount, depending on their particular financial circumstances.

**602.10 USE OF GIFT AID AND GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND OTHER RESOURCES UNDESIGNATED AS TO USE**

Gift aid (private scholarships and awards) designated as to use for cost of attendance (COA) expenses must be so applied; however, gift aid and grants, scholarships, and other resources undesignated as to use may be used at the student's discretion, for whatever purposes the individual deems appropriate.

**602.11 USE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM FUNDS**

The order of responsibility for funding the cost of attendance (COA) for postsecondary training is:

- (A) the expected family contribution (EFC);
- (B) federal, state, and institutional grants awarded;
- (C) (if applicable), private scholarship awards specified to be used for cost of attendance (COA) expenses; and
- (D) lastly, Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance.

**602.12 STUDENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Obtaining, completing, and submitting the FAFSA, renewal application, and any other necessary financial aid forms and information requested by the FAO, submitting completed forms in a timely manner to maximize the

individual's eligibility for grant assistance, and meeting the expected family contribution (EFC) are the responsibilities of the student or, as applicable, the student and his or her family.

### **602.13 EFFECT OF ATTENDING A PRIVATE AND/OR AN OUT-OF-STATE TRAINING INSTITUTION**

When the training institution to be attended is a private in-state or a public or private out-of-state training institution and the selection of the institution is a matter of choice not necessitated by the disability or the particular area of study, the following requirements apply, in addition to the general student financial aid requirements.

(1) The FAFSA or renewal application must be filed within the priority filing period and must identify a state-supported in-state training institution as the first choice to be attended, even though the individual prefers a private and/or an out-of-state institution.

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The step required in paragraph (1) of this section is necessary, in order for the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI) to compute the amount, if any, of the Indiana Higher Education Grant for which the individual is eligible.]*

(2) (A) The individual must provide the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with a copy of the award notice received from SSACI which identifies the amount of state student financial aid grants for which the individual would be eligible, if attending an in-state educational institution; and

(B) when the individual or family and the Counselor determine the final amount and conditions of Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance for the individual's training program, the Counselor must subtract from the unmet need figure the amount of the Indiana Higher Education Grant, as reported by SSACI, that the individual is foregoing by choosing to attend an out-of-state education institution.

(3) In all such cases, the maximum amount of program assistance that can be provided toward meeting the individual's cost of attendance cannot exceed the lesser amount of:



(A) the actual cost of attendance for the same or a comparable course of study at a state-supported in-state institution; or

(B) the revised unmet need figure computed in accordance with paragraph (2) of this section; or

(C) the amount identified by the reasonable fee schedule established by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for postsecondary training costs.

(4) The individual (and, if applicable, the family of the individual) have the responsibility to pay for or arrange for the payment of:

(A) the expected family contribution (EFC); and

(B) any additional costs of attendance incurred as a consequence of the choice of a private or out-of-state training institution in lieu of a comparable state-supported and in-state institution; and

(C) any additional costs incurred for related ancillary services (e.g., the higher costs of interpreting services).

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. If the individual chooses to attend an in-state private institution or an out-of-state institution (public or private) at a higher cost than a comparable in-state training program at a state-supported institution that meets the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual, that choice will almost certainly result in increased cost payable by the individual or family of the individual. Such increased costs are in addition to the expected family contribution. With respect to the determination regarding a training institution "that meets the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual:" (1) the determination of whether or not any institution meets the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual is made by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional, not by the individual or the family of the individual; (2) the requirement is for an institution that meets the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual, not necessarily the institution that best or most completely meets those needs; and (3) where there are multiple training institutions all of which meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual, the institution that meets the needs of the individual at the least cost for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program determines the maximum cost participation of the program.]*

**602.14 PROHIBITED USES**

Vocational Rehabilitation Program funds cannot be authorized, under any circumstances whatever:

- (1) in payment of any financial aid identification or location service;
- (2) in lieu of any federal, state, institutional, or private grant award for cost of attendance (COA) expenses for which the individual is eligible;
- (3) to pay any portion of the expected family contribution (EFC) amount determined by the student financial aid process;
- (4) to pay for any increased cost of attendance (tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, or personal expenses) resulting from the individual's or family's informed choice of a private in-state or a public or private out-of-state training institution, if training that would meet the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs is available from a state-supported in-state training institution;
- (5) for Vocational Rehabilitation Program maintenance or transportation, if no unmet need has been identified;
- (6) for program maintenance expenses in connection with room and board for any training program during which the individual is residing at home while attending school; or
- (7) for the payment of any refund or loan indebtedness owed by the individual or family.

**602.15 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES**

- (1) If there are changes in the student's status (i.e., from dependent to independent status) or changes in the individual's or family's financial situation which have resulted in decreased family income, increased family expenses, or both, the individual and family must apprise the FAO of the training institution attended immediately of such changes, and must submit all substantiating documentation that the FAO requires. The FAO will then determine what effect, if any, the changes will have on the expected family

contribution (EFC) amount, the amount of grant funds awarded, and the unmet need figure.

(2) The Vocational Rehabilitation Program has no authority to set aside or adjust, in any way, determinations made in accordance with the financial aid process described in this chapter with respect to:

(A) the student's status as either a dependent or an independent student;

(B) the cost of attendance (COA) established for the individual by the training institution attended;

(C) the expected family contribution (EFC) amount; or

(D) the resulting unmet need figure.

(3) Disputes regarding any of these determinations must be referred to the FAO of the postsecondary training institution attended for resolution.

## **602.16 NOTIFICATIONS TO STUDENTS**

(1) Initial notification of the requirement to apply for grant assistance must be provided to all applicants/clients as soon as postsecondary training is discussed as a possibility. Such notification must be provided in writing, supplemented, as necessary and appropriate, in the foreign language, alternative format, or appropriate mode of communication of the individual's informed choice, must include information regarding all of the policies and practices contained in this chapter.

(2) The individual must also be notified annually thereafter, appropriately prior to the beginning of the priority filing period (before January 1 of each year), of the need to resubmit the necessary financial aid application(s).

*[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The requirement described in paragraph (2) of this section is met by a reminder provided at the appropriate time during regular counseling and guidance, together with reference to: (1) the applicable section of The Road To Work handbook; and (2) the expectation, specified in the individual's IPE that he or she will make the required annual submissions of the FAFSA and any other necessary applications.]*

***RECORD OF SERVICES DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS*****602.17 REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

If any assistance for postsecondary training in any institution of higher education is provided as a Vocational Rehabilitation Program service, the record of services for the individual must include:

- (1) the arrangements to repay, or have deferred or discharged, any student grant or student loan indebtedness, as described in paragraph 602.05(4);
- (2) the Financial Aid Communication (FAC) form(s) required in accordance with section 602.06 of this chapter;
- (3) information sufficient to demonstrate that any of the costs described in section 602.13(4) of this chapter have been paid or arranged for by the individual or the family of the individual, as appropriate;
- (4) case notes adequate to verify and describe any resolution of special circumstances or disputes made in accordance with section 602.15;
- (5) a copy of any written notifications required by section 602.16, or a case note entry verifying that the notification was provided; and
- (6) fiscal documentation, including all authorizations, claim-vouchers, and billings processed for payment of postsecondary training expenses.

**602.18 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM COMPLIANCE**

All required information, data, and documents must be incorporated and maintained in the record of services for the individual in a manner consistent with Indiana Rehabilitation Information System (IRIS) requirements.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations 34 CFR 361.48(f); 361.50, 361.52.]

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